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Sri Lanka

Abstract

Since the end of the civil war in 2009, there has been a marked deterioration in democratic governance in Sri Lanka, with many commentators describing a shift towards soft authoritarianism. This chapter explores how Sri Lanka's democratic malaise has been shaped by its post-independence history. First, it presents a story of 'institutional decay', examining how contemporary problems of ethno-nationalism, social exclusion and civil war can be clearly traced to the parliamentary system inherited from the British. Second, it builds on this account by exploring how patterns of social exclusion and the institutional responses that they prompted were shaped by broader processes of economic and social development. Third, it describes how successive state reform efforts have failed to resolve ethnic tensions, and have instead increased state centralization and entrenched a unitary state model. The chapter concludes by examining contemporary governance in Sri Lanka, focusing on three core issues: patrimonialism, militarization, and the limits of liberal civil society.

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Introduction

Despite being a small island state of limited geopolitical importance, Sri Lanka has received considerable attention in the wider literature on governance, democracy, and public policy. Much of this interest stems from the fact that Sri Lanka's post-independence history challenges many prevailing orthodoxies relating to the relationship between governance, development and violent conflict. While Sri Lanka has been a functioning democracy since independence and has achieved high levels of human development, progress has been accompanied by a range of social and political problems including social exclusion, clientelism, ethnic division and violent conflict. Most strikingly, the case of Sri Lanka illustrates that the establishment of democratic institutions does not by itself guarantee a broader transformation towards democratic politics.

This chapter sketches the main characteristics of the Sri Lankan polity, and describes the evolution of governance and government on the island since independence in 1948. It also reflects on recent trends in governance since the end of the war and the defeat of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), a separatist group that fought a 26-year civil war with the Government of Sri Lanka. While Sri Lanka has seen a further erosion of democratic governance since the defeat of the LTTE in 2009, this chapter emphasises the continuities between these contemporary problems and more long-standing flaws in Sri Lanka's institutions and political culture.

The chapter will be set out as follows. The first section examines the institutions inherited from the British and some of the key political developments that followed British rule. The second section reflects on the relationship between governance and economic development in Sri Lanka, highlighting how processes of market reform and patterns of state welfarism have shaped wider processes of social exclusion and conflict. Section three explores various state reform efforts, including the introduction of two new constitutions in 1972 and 1978, and subsequent efforts to devolve power away from the centre. Section four reflects on three key contemporary governance issues in Sri Lanka: patrimonalism, militarization, and the role of civil society.

Sri Lanka is an ethnically-diverse society. According to the latest census in 2012, the Sinhalese make up 75% of the population. Sri Lankan Tamils are the largest minority group (11%), followed by Muslims (9%) and Indian Tamils (4%). The Sinhalese live mainly in the Southern part of the country. Sri Lankan Tamils and Muslims have historically been concentrated in the North and East. These ethnic groups are religiously and linguistically distinct - the Sinhalese are mostly Buddhist, while most Tamils are Hindus; the Sinhalese speak Sinhala while Tamils and Muslims speak Tamil.

The colonial inheritance

Sri Lanka's post-independence history can be read as a failure of the state to reconcile the interests of minorities with those of the Sinhalese majority. Bastian [1] argues that this failure occurred at three levels: in terms of the failure of the state's institutions to generate a means of power-sharing between ethnic groups, in terms of the state's identity, and finally in the implementation of public policies.
On achieving independence in 1948, Sri Lanka inherited a set of functioning democratic institutions based on a fully enfranchised electorate, a strong political party system, an efficient civil service, and an independent police and judiciary [2]. Despite these apparent strengths, however, the electoral system inherited from the British lacked sufficient safeguards to protect the interests and entitlements of minority communities. Although a number of measures were subsequently included in the constitution, these proved insufficient in the face of growing pressure from ruling parties, which increasingly sought to alter both the identity of the state and the distribution of state resources to the population [3]. Unlike in India, where the independence movement had forged political parties around class loyalties, Sri Lanka's post-independence politicians quickly came to rely upon ethno-nationalist forms of political mobilization to shore up popular support, with politicians in the South catering to the needs of the Sinhalese majority, and Tamil politicians in the North and East looking after Tamil interests.

The rapid escalation of ethno-nationalist forms of political mobilization was intimately linked to the system of democratic majoritarianism instituted at independence. As DeVotta (3) has described, the system promoted a pattern of 'ethnic outbidding' whereby the major parties in the South of Sri Lanka competed to achieve popular status as the defender of Sinhalese interests. This process began during the 1956 general election when one of the two main Southern parties – the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) -

ran on a 'Sinhala Only' platform, seeking to make Sinhala the sole official language. After the SLFP's election victory this change was passed into law, leading to public protests from Tamils in Colombo.

The language policy formed part of a broader process of Sinhalization of the state since independence. Political competition in the South increasingly revolved around the need to rebalance entitlements, and these policies were extended into the educational system in the 1970s through the policy of 'standardization', whereby ethnic quotas were introduced in the university and civil service admissions process as a means of boosting the representation of marginalised Sinhalese populations in the South. Tamils had been disproportionately represented under the British but successive governments took steps to boost Sinhalese representation and the proportion of Tamils employed in the civil service fell from 30% to 5% between 1956 and 1970 [3].

As well as limiting the availability of state resources to minority groups, these policies also contributed to a gradual shift in the identity of the state. The policies of agrarian populism designed to win support from the Sinhalese majority were couched in a discourse of Sinhala Buddhist revivalism. These projects also involved the resettlement of poor Sinhalese farmers, eroding the electoral influence of the Tamil and Muslim communities in the East. Cultural Sinhalization of the state was accelerated in the 1970s. In 1972, Buddhism was made the official state religion and a more prominent place was granted to Buddhist cultural symbols and practices in state functions.

Post-independence politics saw a deepening of the state's patrimonial character whereby elite groups maintained power on the basis of their capacity to channel state resources or protection to their constituencies, rather than on the basis of performance (4, 5, 6). Clientelism fuelled discontent amongst Sinhala youth in the peripheral rural areas of the South, and contributed to the JVP uprising in 1971 as well as the more protracted insurrection of 1986-9. The steady course of state Sinhalization that followed independence encouraged growing political protest from Tamil groups, which by the early 1970s had led to the emergence of a number of militant groups. As will be discussed in subsequent sections, the state's heavy handed response to these uprisings further alienated marginalised groups.

This section has illustrated that many of the contemporary problems of governance facing Sri Lanka today are rooted in a long-term process of institutional decay, which can be traced back to the period of British rule and the institutions inherited at independence (3). This experience runs counter to democratic peace theory and supports the work of authors like Michael Mann, who have identified strong links between democratic and violent ethnic cleansing (7). The next two sections will build on this institutional account by exploring first how the evolution of governance in Sri Lanka has been related to processes of economic and social development, and second why successive efforts to reform the state have been largely unsuccessful.

Post-independence economic and social developments

As well as generating important lessons about the potential linkages between democratic institutions and social conflict, Sri Lanka has also been an important case study for understanding the potential trade-offs between the policy goals of promoting economic growth and improving social welfare. This section will examine Sri Lanka's post-independence development record and explores the complex outcomes of development processes for conflict and institutional decay.

Since the 1950s, Sri Lanka has consistently outperformed its South Asian neighbours in health and education outcomes. In 2012, it had the highest life expectancy in the region– 74 years compared with a regional average of 68. It also has higher literacy rates – 91% compared with 63% in India and 57% in Bangladesh (8, p.113). While much of the academic debate has focused on the social consequences of a shift towards welfare statism from the early 1960s, it is important to note that Sri Lanka's high living standards outstripped its neighbours before independence (8, 9). Key features underpinning Sri Lanka's relative success included its long-standing investments in human capital (especially education), its tradition of popular participation in politics, its commercialised export sector and efficient though limited tax base, and the country's strategic location in the Indian ocean (10, 11). Sri Lanka's first governor general remarked in 1948 that these conditions made Sri Lanka 'the best bet in Asia' (11). These promising starting conditions were bolstered by a range of social welfare policies introduced after independence which included heavily subsidised rice, free education to university level and subsidised public transport.

Sri Lanka's economic and social development since independence has often been framed as a story of 'missed opportunities' (2). Although Sri Lanka's record in achieving high rates of literacy and life expectancy remains impressive, there is a widespread sense that its record of poverty reduction and economic growth has been disappointing. Whilst not far below the regional average between 1970 and 1995 (an average rate of 4.5% GDP growth per annum vs. a regional average of 4.9%), this performance was nevertheless deemed unsatisfactory given the comparative advantages mentioned above (8). Two main factors explain this relative failure: first, flawed and changeable economic policy pursued in the 1950s, 60s and 70s and second, the broader economic consequences of the civil war that began in 1983 (8, 11, 12).

Between 1956 and 1976, the government attempted to implement an ambitious programme to transform the colonial economy based on exports from the plantation sector through a process of import-substitution. This strategy led to the rapid expansion of the state sector and the nationalization of many private enterprises. As well as damaging economic growth, expansion of the state sector allowed pre-existing patrimonial political relationships to be rapidly extended, increasing social demand for resources while simultaneously blocking the path towards upward social mobility for particular opportunities for particular social groups (13). The subsequent stagnation of the economy also thwarted these inflated demands and expectations, particularly for the growing mass of educated youth. These problems fed directly into several major instances of armed conflict: two youth-led insurgencies organised by the *Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (*JVP – literally 'National Liberation Front') - a Marxist youth movement based

in the South of the country in 1971 and in the late 1980s; and a protracted war between the government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE, which began in 1983 and ended in 2009.

The implementation of a raft of neo-liberal policies in the late 1970s saw a retrenchment of the welfare system, which prompted a reversal of some of the human development gains made since independence. This process of liberalization led to a brief period of more rapid economic growth before the war began in 1983. Liberalization also produced a range of new inequalities, which fuelled tensions between various societal groups and exacerbated divisions between Sinhalese and Tamil populations. While there is some consensus that liberalization contributed to rising social and ethnic tensions, there is considerable disagreement about the precise mechanisms that explain this link. Gunasinghe (14) has argued that small-scale Sinhala industrialists were worst hit by economic reforms, fuelling resentments that fed directly into the violent retaliation against Tamils and their businesses in 1983. Others contend that radical reforms, and the increasingly authoritarian style of governance used to implement them, contributed to growing regional inequality by increasing poverty in the North and East, driving the disillusionment of the Tamil minority (15). Moore (16) describes how these regional inequalities arose because liberalization largely benefited the export sector (which was based largely in the South) whilst damaging the prices of domestic food crops (which were largely grown in the North). Dunham and Jayasuriya (17) have argued that the rolling back of state welfare programmes 'remov[ed] supports for the poor that may have been badly targeted, costly and inefficient, but . . . were buying social peace'. Finally, Rampton and Welikala describe how the opening up of the Sri Lankan economy intensified the reproduction of Sinhala nationalism by providing an opportunity to stress potential threats to Sri Lankan sovereignty and to reassert traditional forms of national identity (18).

The war itself had important consequences for the economy. In the 1980s and 90s, these inequalities were further exacerbated by the military conflict, which stalled economic growth in the North and East whilst allowing development to continue in other regions, particularly the Western Province. One study estimates that the conflict has slowed economic growth in Sri Lanka by an average of 2% per annum (19). This growth was largely restricted to the South West which, barring occasional terrorist attacks, was relatively unaffected by the conflict. By 2005, 50% of Sri Lanka's GDP was concentrated in the Western Province (20). GDP growth has consistently exceeded 4% in the years since the war began. After the setback caused by an LTTE attack on the international airport in 2001, the economy continued to expand during the ceasefire and maintained impressive growth rates in 2007 and 2008 (6.8% and 6.0% respectively) despite the return to war. Since the end of the war, economic growth has continued at roughly the same rate. While the spoils of growth are increasingly spreading to the Northern and Eastern provinces, some have argued that economic expansion in these regions has been largely exploitative, with new ventures controlled by business interests and powerful political groups from the South (21).

Military spending grew from 1.6% of GDP in 1985 to 6% of GDP in 1996. Income from armed forces personnel became a central part of the rural economy as the military expanded to its current size of around 300,000 troops. As the war continued, there has been a gradual accumulation of vested interests

in its continuation from both sides (20, 22). The war permitted a pattern of 'military fiscalism' whereby the army provided a significant source of jobs for the rural Sinhalese population, offsetting the cuts to state employment caused by economic reforms (23). Since the end of the war in 2009, the level of defence spending has continued to rise – reaching a new record level of $1.95 billion in 2013 (24).

This section has described the close relationship between violent conflict and wider processes of economic and social development. The next section will examine how the processes of social exclusion and political marginalization described above have been compounded by a series of institutional changes.

State reform

State reform since independence can be interpreted in two main ways. First, constitutional reforms initiated in the 1970s can be viewed as seeking to promote the cultural and ideological interests of the Sinhalese majority, reflecting the emerging political culture of the South. These reforms have been depicted as cementing the interests of Sinhala nationalist groups in an attempt to tighten the grip of majority interests over Sri Lanka's political system (see 25, 26). Second, reform efforts can be seen as more pragmatic attempts to address many of the social and economic problems identified in the last section, by streamlining decision-making and limiting the influence of certain political groups that were undermining Sri Lanka's long-term economic prospects.

In 1972 a new constitution was introduced which ended Sri Lanka's constitutional ties with the British monarchy. The new constitution reflected the cultural nationalism which had been gradually embedded in the political culture since independence (27). It further alienated the Tamil minority by asserting the state's unitary character, cementing Sinhala as the official language of Sri Lanka and inscribing the state's role as the protector of the Buddhist religion. The republican constitution was also more authoritarian in character and concentrated state power in the hands of the Prime Minister, the cabinet and the Parliament and providing the Prime Minister with wide-ranging new emergency powers.

The highly centralised character of the state was consolidated in a new constitution introduced in 1978. This new constitution replaced the ceremonial presidency system established under the 1972 constitution with a powerful executive presidency modelled on the French system, where the President is largely independent from Parliament. This shift to an executive presidency was accompanied by the adoption of a new multi-member proportional representation electoral system. These moves were justified on the grounds that bold policies were needed to promote rapid economic development and break the vested interests that had grown up around Sri Lanka's political economy since independence and entrenched the pattern of state welfarism. Bastian (28) describes how the Prime Minister, JR Jayawardene, felt that introducing the executive presidency and a system of proportional representation would help to limit the growing influence of 'intermediate classes', who had been pushing 'state capitalist policies to their extreme' (28, p. 207). Another important consequence of the combined presidential and proportional representation system has been to make further constitutional reform very difficult to

achieve, since obtaining the two thirds majority in parliament required to carry out reforms is more challenging under a PR system. This barrier to subsequent constitutional reform was overcome in 2010 when President Mahinda Rajapakse won a two thirds majority in parliament - riding a wave of popularity in the aftermath of his victory over the LTTE. He introduced the eighteenth amendment which removed the two-term presidential limit, permitting him to stand again for presidential office.

In addition to these two major constitutional overhauls, there have been a series of specific efforts to reform the constitution with a view to resolving the ethnic conflict. In 1987, the thirteenth amendment to the constitution was passed as part of the Indo-Lanka Accord signed by the Sri Lankan and Indian governments. It was devised as a solution to the ongoing conflict between the government and the LTTE and attempted to devolve power away from the central state by establishing a new system of provincial government. For a number of reasons, the provincial councils have not served as an effective solution to the political marginalization of the Tamil minority. First, implementation of the devolution of powers has been blocked by politicians at the centre, the bureaucracy and the judiciary. As Uyangoda (25) has argued the principle of devolved power clashed both with the bureaucracy's highly centralised structure and with the entrenched nationalist ideology of the unitary state, which is deep-rooted within the civil service. The judiciary has also proven highly conservative in its approach to state reform, and has been reluctant to rule against the centre in situations where there is a conflict between the exercise of powers by central government and the provincial councils (25). Second, as a result of these dynamics, the centre has tended to maintain control over the provincial councils, with opposition-led councils receiving fewer resources. Third, ironically provincial councils have functioned for a prolonged period in the South of the country, while enjoying only a very short-lived existence in the North and East. The Northern Provincial council was elected for the first time in 2013, while the Eastern Provincial council has functioned since 2008. Fourth, from the outset the thirteenth amendment lacked buy-in from various political constituencies in Sri Lanka – it was opposed by Tamil political parties for delivering less than they had hoped, and by Sinhala nationalists for violating Sri Lankan sovereignty.

Since the thirteenth amendment was passed, there have been a number of subsequent efforts to resolve the ethnic conflict through state reform. A devolution package was proposed in 1994 by the then President Chandrika Kumaratunga during a short-lived peace process, but was rejected by the opposition United National Party (UNP) in parliament. Another peace process took place between 2002 and 2006, facilitated by Norway and backed by four co-chairs (the US, the EU, Japan and the World Bank). The process led the LTTE to present for an Interim Self-Governing Authority (ISGA) – a concrete proposal that fell short of their goal of independence for an independent homeland. Despite this progress, the peace process broke down as popular support drained away in the South, divisions emerged between the UNP and the SLFP, and the Eastern wing of the LTTE broke away. The failure of the peace process was also closely linked to growing opposition from Sinhala nationalists who were concerned about the threat to the unitary state and what they saw as the excessive role played by outside actors (see 29, 30). The incumbent UNP government was defeated in the 2004 parliamentary elections and the SLFP candidate Mahinda Rajapakse was elected President in 2005. He immediately distanced himself from the political

consensus on conflict resolution that had grown up between the two main political parties in preceding years, and asserted his commitment to a unitary state by de-merging the North and Eastern provinces.

Contemporary issues in Sri Lankan governance

Since the resumption of war in 2006, and throughout the post-war period, Sri Lanka has moved towards a more authoritarian system of government (31). This chapter has argued that the current malaise is best understood with reference to a long process of 'institutional decay', wider processes of social and economic development, and a series of flawed attempts to reform state institutions. This final section reflects on three key aspects of Sri Lanka's current predicament: patrimonialism, militarization and emergency rule, and the role of civil society.

Patrimonialism

Although Sri Lanka has been a functioning electoral democracy after independence, this system has seen the continuation of patrimonial governance that preceded the advent of mass participation in democratic politics. Members of parliament have become central figures in delivering spoils handed out by the central state and political parties. Obeysekere (cited in 27, p.128) describes the situation in the early 1970s:

> "Since jobs are scarce, all competitive or open methods of recruitment have been abandoned and the government M.P. of the area is given tremendous power in these appointments…Very often the person who gets the job is a kinsman of the M.P. or one who has access to the patronage system through elite connections."

These patterns run right through Sri Lanka's system of governance. The lowest level officials – *grama niladharis* – are widely perceived to be corrupt (25), while clientelism is starkly played out within parliament – loyal MPs are rewarded with cabinet positions to the extent that there were 93 ministers from a total of 225 MPs in 2013, the largest cabinet in the world. Key political figures from opposition parties have frequently been offered financial incentives to cross-over to government benches (32). Since Mahinda Rajapakse took power in 2005, there has been a further concentration of power in the hands of the President and his close family members – his three brothers enjoy key positions within the government, and his son Namal is being groomed for high office. Patronage at all levels has served to undermine the equality of public service delivery and public trust in government. Growing clientelism during Rajapakse's presidency appears to have been accompanied by growing corruption - Sri Lanka's score in Transparency International's corruption perception index fell from 3.7 in 2002 to 3.1 in 2009 (32).

Emergency governance and militarization

Governance has been deeply affected by armed rebellion and war. Uyangoda (25) depicts the state functioning in two 'parallel modes - as a "normal" state through its institutions and practices of

democratic governance, and as a state at war, engaged in a protracted internal war with its own citizens'. He argues that these two 'contradictory and mutually hostile processes' existed side by side 'one enabling the other's continuous reproduction'. These two strands of governance emerged in the 1970s. The decline of the left in Sri Lanka left a vacuum that was filled with ethno-nationalist political currents in both the Tamil and Sinhalese polities. These forces produced armed rebellions led by the JVP in the South and by various Tamil separatist groups in the North. The state's counter-insurgency response led to three decades of emergency rule between the early 1980s and 2011. During this time the powers of the security forces were strengthened and a culture of impunity developed. Another important enduring characteristic of Sri Lankan politics is the 'symbiotic relationship between criminal gangs and politicians', where 'gang leaders need political protection and in return, carry out the dirty work for their patrons in dealing with opponents' (33). One of the major consequences of this relationship has been repeated episodes of electoral violence (32).

Although militarization has permeated society and politics across the island since the end of the war, its effects are most obvious in the North and East. During the war a complex hybrid system of governance emerged in LTTE-controlled areas. Stokke (34) provides a detailed analysis of the proto-state institutions established by the LTTE in the Northern Province which included border control posts, courts, police service, public services and economic development programmes. Between the LTTE's emergence as the dominant actor in the Tamil polity in the late 1970s and the end of the war, Tamil nationalism has been primarily an authoritarian, militaristic phenomenon. In the post-war period, some limited space for democratic politics has opened up in the Tamil polity. Since the government of Sri Lanka wrested back control of the north and defeated the LTTE in 2009, however, its response has been driven by a concern with securing the North and preventing the re-emergence of militant groups. The Northern Province has been heavily militarized to such an extent that in 2012 one study estimated a ratio of one security personnel for around every five civilians (35). The military has maintained control over post-war administration of the North under the leadership of the provincial governor, a retired major general G.A. Chandrasiri, keeping close oversight of all humanitarian and development projects in the province. They have also taken over decision-making powers on contentious issues such as the allocation of land (36). Furthermore, the military has established a network of major base camps and cantonments, leading to widespread concerns from the civilian population about the durability of the military presence and a wider sense that a process of Sinhalization of the north is underway (37).

There has been a broader erosion of democratic governance in the post-war period. In 2010, the eighteenth amendment to the constitution abolished the two-term limit on presidential office and giving the president final authority over the constitutional council which was responsible for making key appointments in the civil service and government commissions – further politicising the bureaucracy. The period since 2011 has seen further challenges to democracy – critics of the government continue to be suppressed, human rights violations have continued, and the independence of the judiciary has been further compromised by the impeachment of the chief justice in 2013 (38).

The limits of liberal civil society

During the 2002-2006 peace process, many donor agencies envisaged that civil society in Sri Lanka could play an important peacebuilding role by building popular support for the peace process, improving social relations between ethnic groups, and promoting governance reform amongst policymakers. These expectations proved to be misguided for a number of reasons. First, as described above Sri Lankan politics is highly centralised, with limited room for national interests groups to influence the centre. The most influential civil society organizations have been those that have received direct support from the state or political parties. Second, since ethno-nationalism became the dominant mode of political mobilization during the post-independence period, civil society groups that mobilised along ethnic lines tended to be more successful than those that sought to transcend ethnic divisions. Third, the war itself limited scope for political dissent in both the southern and northern polities, with the state adopting a more hostile stance towards civil society organizations since the JVP uprisings in the late 1980s and the LTTE limiting space for critical Tamil civil society organizations in the North and East (39).

These constraints on civil society were tightened after the war resumed in 2006. Since the end of the war in 2009, the defence ministry has taken control of the NGO secretariat, and become much more intimately involved in monitoring the activities of civil society (38). The government has placed strict limits on the types of activities that NGOs can engage in (40), while many human rights activists have faced intimidation. Violence against NGO workers and journalists peaked during the war, with the government implicated in the killings of 17 aid workers in Trincomalee in 2006 (41). These killings have declined in the post-war period, but intimidation and violent attacks on newspapers and civil society organizations continue and Sri Lanka remains one of the most dangerous countries in the world for journalists (42).

Conclusion

This brief overview of Sri Lanka's post-independence history has highlighted three broader lessons that can be gleaned from the Sri Lankan case. First, rather than preventing ethnic violence and civil war, a democratic system in an ethnically diverse society that lacks sufficient safeguards for minority groups can in fact drive processes of inter-ethnic competition and cultural nationalism. Second, processes of economic and social development can also undermine social peace. As we have seen, state welfarism supported improvements health and educational outcomes, but at the same time helped to entrench patrimonial systems of governance which excluded marginalised groups. Third, state reform efforts have often compounded rather than assuaged these existing dynamics. The dominant strain of Sinhala nationalism propelled by 'ethnic outbidding' was reinforced by the new constitutions of 1972 and 1978. The other main consequence of these reforms was to empower the centre – a shift that laid the foundations for the Rajapakse regime and the slide towards authoritarianism that has been observed since 2005.

Together these lessons serve as a powerful rejoinder to mainstream perspectives on the relationships between democracy, market reform and conflict. Since the 1990s, the dominant model of external intervention in conflict-affected societies – often termed 'liberal peacebuilding' - has sought to promote democratization and economic liberalization as tools to support conflict resolution. This perspective has viewed its three main goals (political liberalization, economic liberalization and conflict resolution) as mutually supportive. The highly internationalised peacebuilding efforts led by Norway and various other western donors pursued between 2002 and 2006, which largely conformed to these principles, demonstrated several problems with this approach – economic reform alienated key peace constituencies in the South; heavy internationalization encouraged nationalists to mobilize against the peace process; and the strategy of using economic development as a means of boosting popular support and commitment from conflict parties backfired. This chapter has shown how these contemporary experiments in liberal peacebuilding have important continuities with a broader pattern within Sri Lanka's history whereby efforts to import liberal institutions and economic strategies have led to illiberal outcomes.

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